G. L. Felt, TG 7.1

27 February 1957

Robert E. Campbell, J-6

COMMENTS ON UCRL TAONGI DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

J-6-3534

General Starbird has requested comments from Jim Reeves by 1 March on Gerry Johnson's letter Gepon-313 dated 19 February to Starbird, <u>Proposed Development of Taongi as a Weapons Test Site</u>. Joe Sanders called us on 26 February asking for any comments we might have from a construction standpoint.

We agreed, in discussing the matter with Sanders, to look at Gerry's proposal - no more. It is our feeling that Starbird might well invite the comment of TG 7.1 (not necessarily synonymous with LASL in these matters) and, failing that, Reeves might better request TG 7.1's comments rather than those of J-6 alone. Hence we direct the following comments to you for any disposition you may care to make:

1. Any comment to agencies outside TG 7.1 should be prefaced by a caution that Gerry's paper is the view of UCRL and not necessarily shared by TG 7.1. We feel that UCRL sometimes takes advantage of our name.

2. Page 3, Item 1: Gibbins states that large devices can be fired on the northern side of Bikini Atoll at the same time that firing of smaller devices is being conducted in the Tare complex. This statement might cause the uninitiated to believe that there would be no interaction between shots of any yield or method of firing when tested in this geographical relationship - we don't believe this is the case but admit that given enough time and money the natural interactions can be reduced.

3. Page 3, Item 2: We hate to see UCRL publishing a "concept" for TG 7.1, particularly for distribution at the Washington level.

4. Page 4, Schedule I: Ten days between tower shots seems a little quick to erect the towers, instrument them, have a few dry runs and fire; particularly when one of these ten days is used as a shot day for a 0.5 - 2.0 megaton barge shot in the northern lagoon. We assume that they do not hope to have all towers up prior to the first shot; they have placed events 1 and 7 in the same location, events 1 and 5 being of the order of 1500' apart would hardly permit firing event 1 without severe damage to the event 2 zero area, and event 11 would take a moderate beating from events 9 and 10.

5. Page 5, Schedule II: This schedule contains the same difficulties mentioned above in comment 4.

6. Page 6, Item (a): This paragraph mentions almost every consideration except the minor one of providing time for construction. A 300' tower requires approximately 18 working days for erection once the foundations have been prepared.

7. Page 7, Item (f): Would we agree that said probability is "high"?

8. Page 8, Item 2: Firing in the northern lagoon and working towards the ocean seems to conflict with Schedule II which indicates a reverse process. Barge access to the inside edge of the northern lagoon reef might be quite a problem for the first shot considering the navigational difficulties at this atoll.

9. The only comment we can make on the discussions of Weather and Geography and Fallout is that we are not too sure that the opinions they report out of context accurately reflect the opinions of the original authors.

10. Page 14, Item (a). From the costs per yard quoted here it would appear the M&K can move coral more cheaply ($6.20/cu. yd. including overhead) than can the Navy ($6.50/cu. yd. not including overhead.) Further, any Navy effort would not be free by virtue of not paying their salaries - M&K would still have to support them.

11. Page 15, Item (d): This, as does Item 2 on Page 8, conflicts with Schedule II.

12. Page 15, Item (e): An AFL might be used for housing, but it isn't worth much for storage of construction materials or for maintenance of construction equipment.

13. Page 15, Item (f): M&K were fairly explicit regarding their communication requirement during the construction phase, and we doubt that they would accept the pre-CASTLE military type service again - it didn't work the first time.

14. Page 16, Item 2: Assembly and loading facilities of the type provided at a cost of $870,000 at Parry would hardly suffice without additional water and blast protection - this facility might be rather expensive and relatively shortlived; we wonder if an LSD wouldn't be more economical?

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15. Page 17, Item (b): We doubt the practicality of [redacted] operating a capital ship a major portion of each year on the west coast. (A saving of 1-1/2 man years for [redacted] isn't much compared with the number of man years required from another agency to operate such a ship.)

16. Page 17, Item (c): We believe use of such a ship for TG 7.5 housing is a weak justification in that their major effort occurs prior to the arrival of this diagnostic ship.

17. Page 18, Item (e): It should be made clear that this paragraph is limited to a communications center for TG 7.1 in the Taongi Area. Here again the ship arrives too late to solve [redacted]'s communications problem during the construction phase.

In general we feel that Gerry's proposal tends to present a rather palliative version by omitting difficulties obvious to a more experienced group. We feel that both the pro's and con's should be presented in any proposal which requests a policy decision.

Robert N. Campbell, J-6

RNC:jjr

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